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RHMFIUU/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
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UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000868

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

FOR EAP/MTS AND INR

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MY](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALI PIRATES RELEASE HIJACKED MALAYSIAN SHIPS
FOLLOWING RANSOM

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Somali pirates released two hijacked Malaysian tankers on September 27, following the payment of a multi-million dollar ransom by the Malaysian government. The exact amount of the paid ransom is unknown due to conflicting reports, but it is in the range of \$2-3 million. The U.S. assisted Malaysia with information during this ordeal. One Malaysian warship remains in the Gulf of Aden and two more are resupplying in Djibouti prior to returning to Malaysia. Malaysian Foreign Minister Rais Yatim raised concerns over piracy during his recent address at the UN General Assembly. End Summary.

THE STATUS OF THE SHIPS

2. (SBU) Two Malaysian shipping vessels, the Bunga Melati II and the Bunga Melati V, were hijacked by Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden on August 19 and 25, respectively. The two ships were both palm oil tankers with a combined crew of 65 Malays and 15 Filipinos. Following negotiations with the Malaysian government, the pirates received a ransom in the range of \$2-\$3 million, after which they released the vessels. One of the Filipino crewmembers was killed during the initial hijacking, but the other 79 crewmembers are reported to be unharmed. The two ships are now en route to Djibouti, where they are expected to swap out crews, resupply, and continue to their original destinations of Rotterdam and Singapore. The hijacked crews were expected to fly back to Malaysia as early as September 29. The U.S. shared intelligence with the Malaysian government, but otherwise provided no assistance during the two hijackings.

3. (SBU) The Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) currently has three ships in the Gulf of Aden. Two of the RMN vessels, the Leiku and the Inderapura, are escorting the Bunga Melati II and Bunga Melati V to Djibouti, after which they will return to Malaysia. The third ship, the Mahawangsa, remains in the Gulf of Aden with the purpose of escorting Malaysian ships.

MALAYSIA HIGHLIGHTS PIRACY AT UNGA

4. (SBU) On the political front, Malaysian Foreign Minister Rais Yatim mentioned the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Aden during his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly. Rais stated, "My delegation also calls on States, particularly the littoral States in that region, to provide the necessary means to ensure the security of navigation in their waters." Rais also stated "My delegation stands ready to work closely with other States, which share the same

predicament. We urge the Security Council to immediately address this problem in an effective manner." (Comment: Rais' remarks on littoral states' responsibilities reflect Malaysia's own approach to the Straits of Malacca. End Comment.)
KEITH